

INFORMALLY SPEAKING

The newsletter of the Informal Science Education Association of Texas

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Dear ISEA Members,

In the Spring of this year, the ISEA Board formed a Diversity Committee to examine ways the organization could affect positive change around diversity in our field. A concern and commitment for inclusion is not new for informal science education.

Many of our member institutions have been working for years toward a more equitable and diverse reality for our state. Despite these efforts, minority groups continue to be underrepresented in the sciences and continue to lack access to quality science education. And so, our work continues. The purpose of the Diversity Committee is to provide leadership and support for this ongoing work.

I am proud to share ISEA's Statement on Equity and Diversity because I believe that words matter. But I also believe that words by themselves are meaningless unless followed by action. Therefore, the ISEA Board has also outlined concrete strategies we will undertake to back up our words. We want you, our members, to hold us accountable to our words. And we want you to join us in our efforts.

The ISEA Board has planned an annual Conference that puts a high priority on Diversity. Our Keynote speaker, José González, the founder of Latino Outdoors, will share his organization's work to connect Latino communities in nature and outdoor experiences. Session presenters will share tools to engage under-served audiences and to create inclusive spaces for visitors with disabilities. David Buggs, Chief Equity and Diversity Officer for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, will discuss increasing the diversity of your organization through recruitment, hiring, and retention.

At the annual Conference this February, we hope you come prepared to be inspired. Our goal is that you leave prepared to act.

Sincerely,
Christina Soontornvat
President-elect

ISEA STATEMENT ON EQUITY AND DIVERSITY

ISEA is committed to making Informal Science Education inclusive of Texans of all abilities, ethnicity, race, gender, age, sexual orientation, nationality, and cultural background.

We believe that science is for all, and we recognize that members of the groups embraced above face underrepresentation in the sciences and a lack of access to science education experiences. Ultimately, we want our boards, our staff, and our visitors to reflect the communities we serve.

We are dedicated to equipping our members with the tools to affect change by:

- Developing exhibits, programs, and content that welcomes and honors diverse worldviews and draws on the experiences of our communities.
- Connecting with our whole communities and engaging a range of stakeholders in serving diverse audiences.
- Recruiting, retaining, and supporting volunteers and staff at all levels that reflect the diversity of our communities.



STRATEGIES:

- Set feasible ongoing goals for how ISEA can make an impact on Diversity in the ISE field in our state.
- Collect resources on strategies and best practices to share with our membership. Share these on our website, newsletter, and at the annual Conference.
- Invite session presenters and speakers who increase knowledge of issues surrounding diversity and offer our members tangible strategies for addressing these issues. The Program Committee will cultivate a Diversity strand for every annual Conference.
- At least one member of the Diversity Committee will also serve on the Program, Speaker, and Communications Committees.
- Actively recruit to ensure diverse ISE professionals at all levels of expertise attend our Conference, contribute to our Conference, and serve on our Board.
- Invite new organizations to participate from all regions of Texas, with a concentrated effort at engaging regions with less representation at our Conference.
- Actively seek feedback from and listen to marginalized groups so that we can be respectful and effective with our actions. Alter our strategies if they become harmful or ineffective.



→ **Fall into CAST!**



The Informal Science Education Association of Texas volunteers helped at the booth during CAST. All visitors were provided information about how we as an organization provide a space for all Texas informal educators to network with each other and with classroom teachers.



ISEA Booth

represent a variety of partners who support the Texas teacher in many ways from outreach education to materials and resources. Teachers find that most of these resources are FREE and easy to obtain for their instruction.

The STAT Affiliates are essential to the classroom teacher, providing current education resources focused on the needs of the Texas classroom.

Texas Informal Educators



Texas A&M Forest Service

Come join us next year with



Texas Parks & Wildlife Department

CAST is in Houston, Texas! We look forward to seeing all of our friends in Texas education.



ISEA Conference

Come join us!



Visit our [website](#) and learn more about how you can be a part of

ISEA. Come to New Braunfels, Texas and network with other like-minded educators. We look forward to seeing you there!

Last year, we gathered at the Houston Zoo. A group of motivated and science loving educators came together in Houston.



Anjoli having fun at the Zoo



Professional Development



Exhibit at the Houston Zoo

[Learn more about registration...](#)



Tell Us!

Our members have much to share and we invite you to send us announcements from your organization. You may have an individual or group to honor. Someone within your group has received an award, or you simply want to highlight special events for your organization.



Send an email to nicki.sohn@sbcglobal.net

Newsletter tentative time frame:

Spring Newsletter - April, 2017

Fall Newsletter - November 2017

